

AN
Inaugural Essay
on the



For the degree of Doctor of Medicine
in the University of Pennsylvania
by William Whelan M.D.

of
Pennsylvania
Decr. 26. 1827

*Quod potius ut laetitia opus ne, scindere propositum
Invenimus labor et fustia tentata relinquere
Col. Dethle. 1827.*

AN

Journal of the

Rev. Mr. [illegible]

On the Moxa.

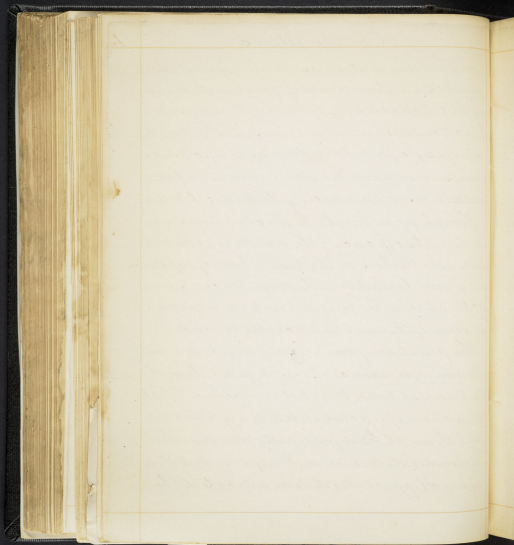
1

This remedial means in its infancy has derived all those powers of fortune attendant on the introduction of every new remedy into practice, which is either immediately extolled as a specific for certain diseases, or rejected as useless, inert according to the effects, the prepossessions or prejudices of the medical world.

Though for a long time fluctuating & unsettled, the efficacy of the remedy is at present fully established on the broad basis of experience & it is now looked to with confidence as a palliative, at least, if not as a radical cure for some of the most intractable diseases.

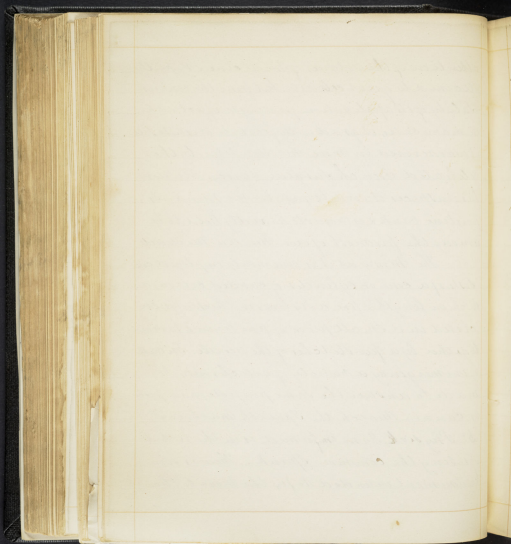
The practice of cauterizing originated with the Chinese, when or it was diffused through the Oriental countries, till it reached Egypt, where it was, perhaps, used to a greater extent than it had previously been elsewhere. It should into notice in Europe by the patronage of Hippocrates, it soon attracted the

2

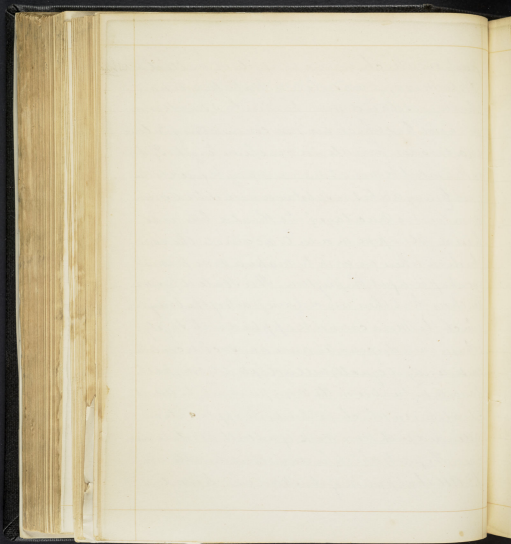


attention of the votaries of Medicine rapidly
 attained to great celebrity; but from the univer-
 -sality of its application proving ineffectual
 in many cases, it gradually fell into disuse, till
 it was revived in more modern times, by the
 celebrated French Surgeon Larrey. Under
 his auspices it soon began to re-assume its
 pristine rank & is now deservedly held to be
 among the foremost of our *Medicamenta*.

The Moya as it is commonly employed con-
 -sists of a cone or cylinder of carded cotton, an
 -inch in length & five or six lines in thickness, en-
 -closed in a small piece of fine linen & fastened
 together by a few stitches of the needle. In case
 of emergency a variety of articles may be
 made to answer the same purpose, as a piece
 of Cannon Maccok, the Spanish Maccok &c.
 Dr Physick, I am informed, is in the habit
 of using the common Spunk. There is an
 instrument intended to fix the Moya to the



part on which we are to apply it, called a
 Pale Mora, it consists of a Metallic ring,
 which is isolated from the skin by 3 small ivory
 or ebony legs, which are non conductors of Caloric
 a wooden handle 5 or 6 inches in length. If this
 instrument be not at hand, it may be fixed to the
 part by any adhesive substance as dissolved Sugar
 Gum Arabic Mucilage &c. We should likewise
 have a Blow-pipe in order to accelerate the com-
 bustion where we wish to make a more perma-
 nent powerful impression. It is stated by some
 Authors, that there are certain parts of the body on
 which the Mora cannot be applied with safety;
 others again disavow any such exception,
 considering it equally well adapted to every part.
 Lancy in his treatise on the Mora points out the con-
 trindications in which he thinks its application
 attended with some risk, if not with absolute dan-
 -ger. The parts which he deems exceptionable are
 1st All that portion of the Head which is only

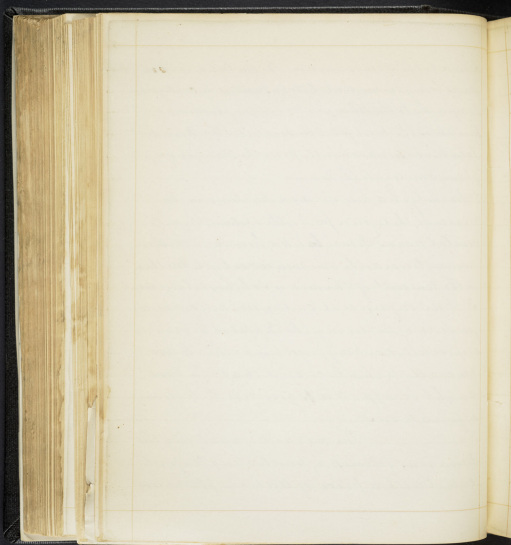


4
caused by the Pericranium. The irritation it pro-
duces being immediately transmitted by contiguous
sympathy to the brain, & the sinuses producing
sometimes the most fatal consequences. The Acantho-
latis two cases which fully prove the danger of ap-
plying cantharids to the head.

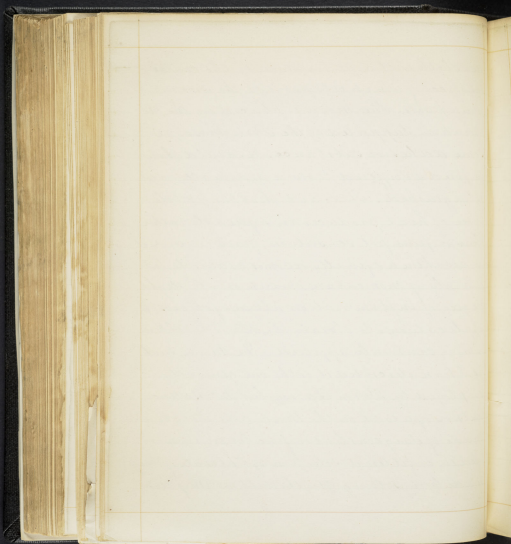
2^d On the Eye lid, Nose, Lips & a Trachea, on the
Mammaræ, the upper part of the abdomen & on the
Genital organs. It may be used, however, in the Peri-
naeum, towards the commencement of the cure
for the removal of Chronic & Stenous enlargements.

3^d Over superficial tendons, over articulations
for fear of injuring the Capsular Ligaments
& especially over bony projections which are
generally so thinly covered that the bone
might be affected & give rise to tedious
afflictions.

The method of applying the
Mova is as follows; after detecting the part
cure it with a piece of adhesive plaster or



but cloth, with a perforation in the centre,
the object of which is to protect the surroun-
-ding parts. The Moya is placed in the per-
-foration, supported by the Poste Moya, or
some adhesive substance. It should then
be fired & suffered to burn gradually until
extinguished. It is said that the first de-
-gree of heat produces an agreeable rather
than a painful sensation; pain is gradual-
-ly awakened & finally becomes exquisite, but
it is only of momentary duration. A slight
degree of inflammation always follows the
application & to obviate this, the Sol. Alkali
is most commonly applied. The Moya, such
as I have described it, is the one generally
employed by Baron Larrey, but Mr. Wallace
author of a work on the Moya, advises it to be
made of Surgeons lint or fine linen immer-
-sed in a filtered solution of Chlorate of Potash
made by dissolving 31 of the salt in 3iv of dis-



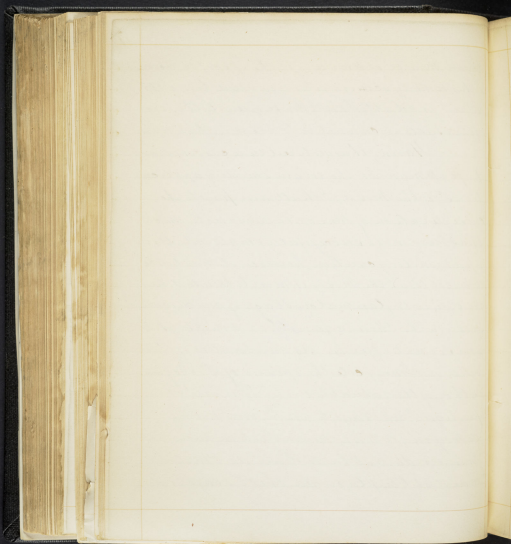
6
titled water, which, he says, burns slowly
but steadily. For, he adds, if the combustion
be too quick, the empyem will be too tran-
sitory, & if too slow the Blow pipe will be
requisite which complicates the operation.

As respects the *Modus Operandi* of
the *Moya*, it proves serviceable merely by
acting as a counter agent, exciting a su-
perficial irritation, thereby eradicating
deeper seated inflammation, or at least
rendering them more medicable. It is gen-
erally supposed that the *Modus operandi*
of the *Moya* & Blister, is very analogous,
but this opinion appears to be erroneous, from
the consideration that in the employment
of the *Moya*, it should ever be a grand
object to prevent that state on which the
action of a blister depends, viz. inflamma-
tory action. On some occasions when the
Moya is indicated, the formation of a



drain may be of service, yet the specific action of this remedy occurs & is terminated before the drain is established & consequently the benefit resulting cannot be traced to that cause.

Having thus noticed in a cursory & imperfect manner the origin & mode of application of the Moxa, I shall now pass to the consideration of some of the diseases in which it has been most successfully employed. As a preliminary caution, however, it should be observed that the Moxa is never to be used in the Acute Inflammatory Stage of any disease; for it is in the Chronic forms that it displays its most signal effects. As corroborative of this position, I may cite the opinion of Dr. Boerhaave, author of the valuable work "Le Traité Thérapeutique," who says to use his own words: "Ce Moxa (le Moxa) ne convient en aucune manière durant la violence de l'inflammation; on ne doit l'employer que chez les sujets dont



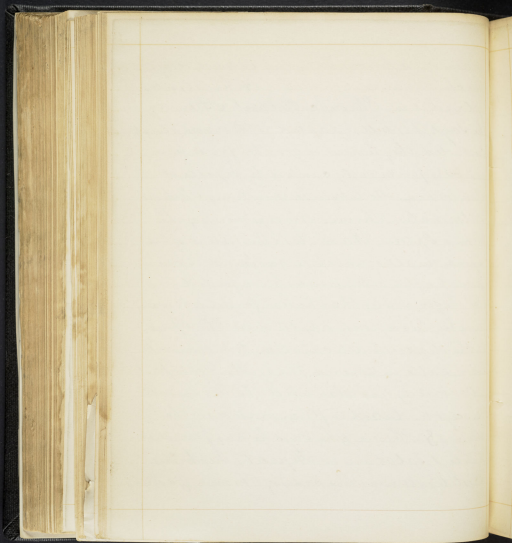
"la maladie est passée à l'état chronique".

This remedy has been more generally employed in local than in constitutional affections. Yet whilst perusing Baglivi's "De Praxi Medica" I saw an account of Intermittent Fever being cured by this remedy. The passage is as follows. "Chinensis, aliique "Indiarum Medici, morbo eliminant per "Moxam et Acupuncture, imò febres quasdam "intermittentes, ad miraculum jure eradicaunt "sola astione in tale facta. Teste Melhelmo "sen Rhyno". These are the only cases of Fever, to my knowledge which have been treated by this means. But should the practice become more diffused than it now is, the Annals of Medicine would perhaps abound with the records of cures by a method so simple, yet so efficient. Parry has successfully used the Moxa in Asthma, when unattended by malformations of the Thorax



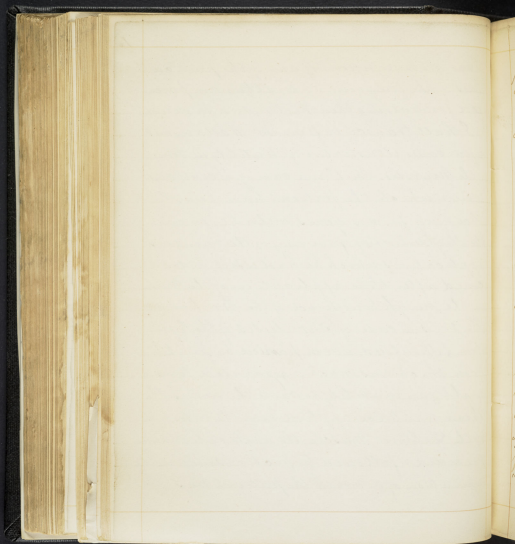
or any of its viscera in subjects not very much advanced in years. It has also employed it in Chronic Catarrh & Pleurisy, he says, it is well adapted to these complaints, provided they have not gone too far or have not been primarily caused by repelled Gonorrhoea. He likewise mentions Pthiasis Pulmonalis, Chronic Engorgements of the Liver & Spleen, Rachitis & Curvature of the Spine, in all of which he has found it beneficial after other means have failed.

Dr. Begin states that he has found a large number successfully applied on the Spine or the different articulations, to be eminently serviceable in Chronic Phlogosis of those parts. Mr. Boirdy has also used the Moxa with success in latent inflammations of the Lungs & Pleura & he says he has found it not less salutary in Hepatitis, Nephritis, Cystitis, & even in some cases, of Chronic Gastritis.



I am not in possession of any of the particular
-lars of the foregoing cases & thus am pre-
-vented from giving their History more in detail.

I shall transcribe from Mr. Wallace's book
a few cases illustrative of its utility in some
of the Neuroses. The 1st is a case of Sciatica
under which the patient had been la-
-bouring for six years without experiencing
the slightest relief from any of the numerous
applications which he had used, he was
cured after three applications of the Moya
in the neighbourhood of the Trochanter
The 2^d is a case of Paralysis of the left
arm & shoulder, accompanied by great
pain which was much aggravated towards
night & an inability to raise the arm. The
Moya was twice applied near the insertion
of the Deltoid Muscle, the applications suc-
ceeded & followed by frictions & before the
expiration of a month the patient was



perfectly convalescent. Mr Roux employed the Moxa in a case of Spontaneous Paralysis of the Deltoid Muscle at St Bartholomew's Hospital. It was applied a little below the Acromion process of the Scapula, that in a few days the motions of the arm were restored. This was a case which had relapsed after having been cured by other means. I have also seen it employed in a case of Paralysis of the Deltoid Muscle in the Alms House; it was applied near its insertion & not followed by much relief. I cannot say whether a perfect cure ensued, as I lost sight of the patient before he had perfectly recovered. Various other applications had been tried in this case previous to the use of the Moxa with but little benefit. Larrey speaking of its utility in Paralysis has the following passage. "L'expérience nous a appris que le Moxa produit des effets



"Manducator, contre les affections paralytiques
 "des muscles lorsqu'ils ne sont pas incurés"
 He also recounts several cases, which were
 completely relieved by this remedy, a few of
 which I shall transcribe in as concise a
 manner as possible. The 1st is the case of a
 young soldier, who in consequence of a
 fall on the right side of his head from a
 horse was labouring under Hemiplegia
 of the left side & a total loss of speech; his
 left eye was permanently open & his mouth
 violently retracted to the left side, symp-
 toms of Cephalalgia were developed & the
 functions in general & particularly that
 of respiration were but imperfectly per-
 formed. In this deplorable condition, he was
 admitted into the Hospital of Gros Caillou.
 Cups & vesicatories were unavailingly
 employed. Three Moxas were applied to the
 neck & over the course of the principal branches



of the Cervical Nerves of the right side, which completely succeeded in dissipating the paralytic symptoms & restoring to their proper equilibrium the hitherto interrupted functions. In less than a month from his admission into the Hospital, he was able to rejoin his Regiment, having perfectly recovered.

He likewise relates two cases of Hemiplegia Facialis which had resisted all the ordinary forms of treatment, which yielded to the repeated application of the Moxa over the principal branches of the Facial Nerve. Chronic Hemiplegia if appeared cannot be successfully managed in this way on account of the structural derangement existing in the portion of the Brain or Spinal Marrow whence it proceeds which is by no means accessible to the action of the Moxa. Larrey states that recent paralysis of the lower extremities

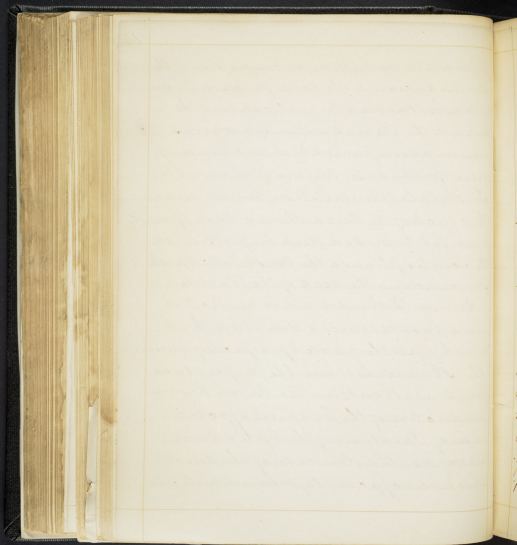


produced by concussion or compression of the Cauda Equina, or the nerves proceeding from it, maybe remedied by applications of the Moya to the Sacral & Lumbar regions, when unaccompanied by incontinence of urine, for this case, say she, is incurable.

To obviate this condition, he continues, the effects of the Moya should be sufficiently powerful to make a deep impression on the Sphincter plexus & the Constrictor muscles surrounding the neck of the bladder.

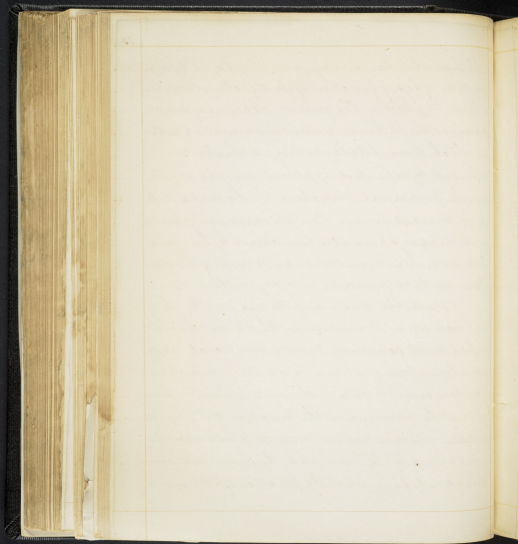
However it should not be neglected, it is a last resource & doubtless that which offers the greatest prospects of recovery.

The Plinacum is here the proper place for its application. The Moya has been productive of the happiest effects in cases of Paralysis of the Optic Nerve. Larrey mentions two cases of this kind which were effectually relieved by its use.



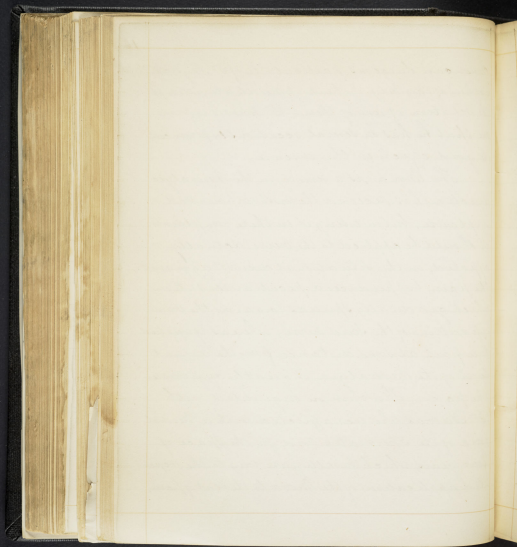
It has also been successfully employed by him in cases of loss of function of the Olfactory, Gustatory & Auditory Nerves. He gives an account of several cases in which hearing was very indistinct, & others in which it was totally destroyed, which were relieved by repeated applications of the M. o. a. over the principal branches of the Facial & Auditorial Nerves. Complications of Aphonia with deafness have also been cured by him in a like manner. Some remarkable cases of this nature are to be found in his essay on the M. o. a.

Of all the diseases of the Eye in which it has been used Amaurosis is the one in which it has most frequently proved beneficial, Vision sometimes being restored before the combustion has ceased. A case of this nature I am informed has lately occurred in the practice of Dr. Phipps. A case of Amaurosis is recorded in Dossy's Surgery cured by this means & as they have been comparatively frequent in the practice of some

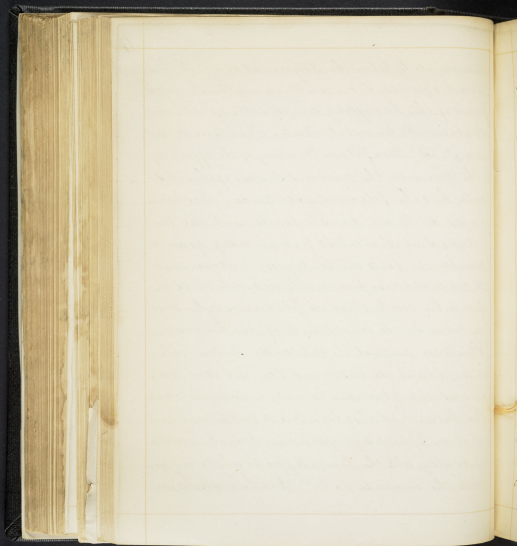


American Surgeons, particularly of Dr. Physick & others of this City, I think it needless to attempt the relation of any of them. Dr. Harris informs me that he has on several occasions experienced its good effects in this disease.

The Moxa as a remedy in the Neuralgic Affections has received the most unbounded applause, but in using it in these complaints it should be applied to the nerve actually affected, in this situation it does not aggravate the pain, but produces a peculiar sensation which gradually spreads towards the ramifications of the said nerve; whereas if applied to a part at some distance from the actual seat of the Neuralgia, it greatly aggravates the pain. This opinion originated with Dr. Barral, who was afflicted with a Neuralgia of the Spermatic Cord for the space of four years, which finally gave way to the repeated applications of the Moxa to the seat of pain,



immediately below the Inguinal ring. It has proved equally serviceable in all the Proleant forms of this harassing complaint as Sic Dou-
 -loureux, Inter costal, Emoro Popliteal Neural-
 -gia &c. Dr Monfalcon's treating of the effects of
 of the Moya in the various shapes of this dis-
 -ease, has the following sentence: "Les avan-
 -tages du Moya dans le traitement des Neu-
 -ralgies sont démontrés par un assez grand
 "nombre de faits authentiques; quelques uns
 "de ces maladies très invétérées ont ce dé en-
 "fin à la combustion de plusieurs cylindres
 "de coton sur le trajet du nerf douloureux.
 "Pour ce qui est de leur succès si souvent
 "et dans tant de cas divers s'en est suivi avec
 "succès dans plusieurs Neuralgies, Anomales rebelles."
 The Moya has also been tried with various
 effects in Epilepsy, operating sometimes ben-
 -eficially, at other times appearing to aggra-
 -vate the disease. Mr Roche & Sanson



Speaking of the treatment of this disease, say
 "On a appliqué avec succès les Moras sur le
 point de départ de l'aurea," & this appears
 to be the only benefit which can be expected
 from its application in this complaint.

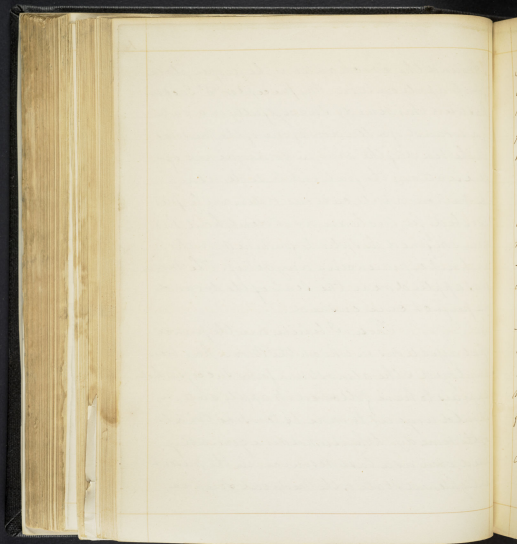
In Boys Convulsiva it also promises to be
 of utility & as the causes & treatment of this
 distressing malady are alike unknown, we
 are justifiable, I think, in experimenting
 until we arrive at something like certain-
 ty in both respects. W^r Röcke & Sanson
 speaking of this disease, say, that it is pro-
 bable that it would yield to the Mora
 applied to the lateral part of the Larynx,
 after other remedies have failed.

The Mora has also been enumerated among
 the remedies for Morbus Coxarius & it often
 receives the commendations which have been
 bestowed upon it, particularly when applied
 in the commencement of the disease.



Around the Trochanter is the proper place for its application. My preceptor Dr Jackson has used this remedy successfully in a case of a wound or laceration of one of the Muscles at the bend of the arm, in consequence of a severe fall, the patient, besides using the various applications ordinarily prescribed for such an accident, had his arm confined in Splints for nine months without experiencing any relief. The Moxa was applied near the seat of the wound & a perfect cure ensued.

These, I believe, are the principal affections in which the Moxa has been employed & the almost uniform success which appears to have followed its application, should urge us to more extensive trials of the remedy. Why it is not more generally used, even as a last resource, in the present enlightened state of the Medical Science,

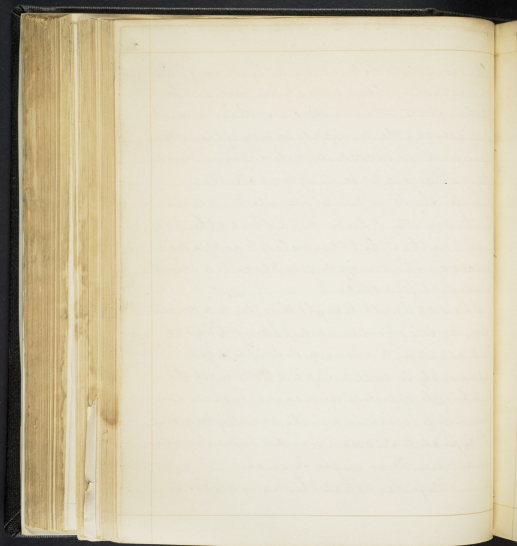


I am unable to determine. Mr. Wallace in his
 introductory observations to his work on the
 Moxa, states, that he conceives, that Rational
 prejudice & the misapplication of the remedy
 have had no inconsiderable share in preven-
 -ting its general use in Great Britain.

Whether the same causes operate to its exclusion
 in this country, I know not & should they, it is
 high time that the trammels of bigotry & preju-
 -dice were shaken off to give place to a sound
 & rational practice.

I have at length brought this essay to a conclu-
 -sion, My sole object in undertaking it, was to
 call attention to a remedy so simple & yet so
 apparently so well adapted to diminish the
 number of the *Opuscula Medicorum*, which are so
 frequently to be met with in the annals of Medicine.
 To expect to succeed would be presumption
 in a mere *tyro* in the Science.

Confident that the many errors to



21
be met with in these pages, attributable to
the youth & inexperience of the Author
will be regarded with a forgiving eye,
while its merits if any in proper will be
duly appreciated, I respectfully submit
this dissertation to the inspection of the
Faculty.

